



What Our Students Say

What do you like about BIDJ?

Being together with other Scripture geeks. It's the only place I've found that I can talk about Scripture and share what I've learned. It's so exciting to share with other members some tidbit of information they've found or that I've discovered.

Carol P., Holy Spirit, Naperville

The pace at which the class progresses. The weekly sessions allow for time to cover several chapters and to me gives ample time for home study and work without being rushed or being too slow.

Grace B., St. Mary Immaculate, Plainfield

BIDJ has been a life-changing course for me, especially since I am a convert. I feel edified and enlightened, and I don't feel lost in the Bible anymore.

Elizabeth L., Queenship of Mary, Glendale Heights

I've enjoyed the class lectures that lay the groundwork for the week's readings. [W]e receive a well rounded introduction to the material we will be studying. We explore the biblical characters, geography, story highlights, literary aspects, and themes particular to each book. [Everything] helps us to put our modern sensibilities aside and view these writings through the perspectives of our spiritual ancestors.

Marge P., St. Jude, New Lenox

It's amazing how our group comes up with the same answers some weeks and we have such different ideas the next. I love seeing how others interpret what we all read.

Denise D., Holy Family, Shorewood

How is your experience and understanding of the Bible different now?

[BIDJ] has brought the Bible to life. I see the people in the Bible as flesh and bone people with feelings and emotions. I am finding the Bible to be more than a prayer book and more than a book of stories. It's as if a light bulb goes off almost every time I read the Bible: "That's what it means," or, "That's why this is done in that way."

Grace B., St. Mary Immaculate, Plainfield

Before taking this class, reading the Bible was like trying to read a foreign language. With what I've learned in BIDJ, the Bible's books are now easy to understand and relevant to my everyday life.

Joanne W., St. Anne, Oswego

I am learning that in order to truly appreciate the New Testament, one has to be familiar with the Old Testament.

Audrey E., St. Thomas the Apostle, Naperville

Because I first attended Bible studies that were not Catholic-based, my previous view of the Bible was focused much more on the literal translation and applying it to our lives. This year has helped me see how the Church studies the Bible and has put all I previously learned into perspective. When I first started Bible study, I was what St. Paul would have called an infant that was fed milk because I was not able to take in solid food (1Cor 3:2), but now I feel as though I am truly ready for the "meatiness" of the Bible as seen through the Catholic filter.

Linda H., St. Elizabeth Seton, Naperville

What aspect of BIDJ has helped your faith life?

This class is taught in such a way that we can relate to the biblical characters' struggles and triumphs with their relationships with God. The story of the Israelites is becoming my story. As a returning Catholic with many questions about the faith, this class has been most instrumental in teaching me what it means to be a better Catholic and a better person.

Joanne W., St. Anne, Oswego

I used to think the God of the Old Testament was a demanding and vengeful God. I have learned that the Old Testament is the start of an incredible and unfolding story of how an invisible God has revealed His steadfast love and His will, starting with the first humans and continuing all the way to our current generation.

Marge P., St. Jude, New Lenox

I had memorized the Baltimore Catechism, known doctrines, had many faith insights and even thought I had some knowledge of salvation history. Still, the wonderful stories of the Bible did not resonate and become personal experience until I participated in this program. [BIDJ] invites one into reflection in a wonderful way.

Mary M., St. Mary Immaculate, Plainfield

Picking apart and discussing the Scripture. When I used to go to Mass and hear the readings, some would have meaning, some would be just words. I find that I'm listening more to the readings and truly looking for meaning and relevance in them.

Grace B., St. Mary Immaculate, Plainfield

FOR MORE INFORMATION, call 630-281-4515 or email carol@scriptureschool.org



What Our Students Say (continued)

Two stories...

1. Growing up Catholic in the 1960s and early 1970s, I was not exposed to Scripture study. So, when I arrived at college and students from Campus Crusade for Christ and similar organizations challenged my beliefs with verses like Matt 23:9, admonishing us to call no man Father, and Eph 2:8-9, which I was told flew in the face of Catholic teaching that we must “work” our way to heaven, I was taken completely off-guard. I did not know how to refute the claims that Catholics had twisted and misinterpreted what the Bible taught.

Not surprisingly, it wasn't long before I walked away from the Catholic Church. I stayed away from all organized religion for several years, but when I did pursue God again, it was as a Protestant.

During the nineteen years I spent in Protestant churches, I learned a lot about the Bible. Truthfully, though, what I learned was a great number of disjointed Bible verses, literal interpretations that were devoid of historical and cultural context, and doctrinal positions that ignored the foundations of the early Church which could be found threaded throughout a more comprehensive study of the Old and New Testaments.

My journey back to the One True Church was long and arduous, and even now, five years later, I am still trying to “unlearn” some things, and discover many others for the first time.

Upon my reversion, I was somewhat dismayed to find how little emphasis some parishes placed on Bible study. Through my process of “enlightenment” to the truth of Catholicism, I came to realize how solidly biblical its roots are.

It seemed to me that Catholics would be much more firm in their faith, and young people would not wander away from the Church like I had if they could be taught how the Catholic Church was born directly from the teachings presented in Scripture.

While I was grateful when my parish began some of the Ascension Press studies taught by Jeff Cavins, I longed for a richer, more in-depth examination of the Bible. The Biblical Institute has been an answer to prayer.

[The] lectures, weekly reading assignments, and stimulating class discussions have all combined to give me a more profound respect for the inspired work that went into the compilation, organization, and translation of the Bible itself, and a deeper appreciation of God's faithfulness throughout history, in spite of man's continual failings.

In essence, in my opinion, the Biblical Institute is an amazingly effective vehicle through which the Catholics of our diocese have an opportunity to know the Lord more intimately, and to appreciate our faith more vividly for the blessing that it truly is.

Dede S., Corpus Christi, Carol Stream

2. I have a disability. I am not able to voice my words through the normal process.

I was afraid of enrolling in the Biblical Institute program at first just because of my disability. The more I thought about it, the more I felt compelled to enroll. ... I emailed my concerns about my ability to participate [to the teacher] and I made the best decision of my life.

My first day was the worst day for me. I admit I was scared. I had second thoughts. Well, I met the nicest people and we all had a common goal. We wanted to learn about the Bible and increase our faith. Knowledge is power.

We need more Catholics to step up to the plate and start defending their faith. The time of being a Catholic in name only is over. I want to quote the Bible and know it as well as other faiths and be able to back up my words directly from the Bible.

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age” (Matt 28:19-20).

The opportunity is here, so enroll and hang on for the ride of your life.

Denise D., Holy Family, Shorewood